

## Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10  
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 SY-05 AID-05 /049 W  
-----082510 111548Z /43  
R 111355Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5263

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2677

DEPARTMENT FOR HA

E.O. 11652 GDS  
TAGS SHUM, ELAB, AR  
SUBJECT LABOR DISAPPEARANCES

1. SUMMARY. DEPASST SECRETARY SCHNIEDER (HA/HR)  
HAS ASKED FOR EMBASSY LATEST INFORMATION  
REGARDING WORKER OR TRADE UNION KIDNAPPINGS.  
THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES THE INFORMATION WE  
HAVE ON SUCH DISAPPEARANCES, THE NUMBERS  
INVOLVED, THE INGERENT PROBLEMS WE HAVE  
IN ASSESSING OUR SOURCES RELIABILITY, THE  
PATTERNS WE SEE IN SUCH INCIDENTS AND THE  
PROBABLE CAUSES AND SIGNIFICANCE. KEEPING  
THE LID ON LABOR HAS BEEN A HIGH GOVERNMENT  
PRIORITY SINCE THE MILITARY TOOK OVER IN  
1976 AND STRIKES ARE CONSIDERED SUBVERSIVE.  
MOST LABOR ARRESTS TOOK PLACE  
SHORTLY FOLLOWING THE COUP, BUT SURVEILLANCE AND  
REPRESSION CONTINUE, WITH HEIGHTENED SECURITY MEASURES  
TAKING PLACE DURING MOMENTS OF ILLEGAL STRIKE ACTIVITY  
AS OCCURERED LAST NOVEMBER AND AGAIN LAST MONTH. IF  
DEPARTMENT HAS ANY INFORMATION WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THE  
PATTERN OF WORKER DISAPPEARANCES HAS CHANGED OR THAT  
THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT UPSURGE IN REPRESSION AGAINST  
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THE WORKER SECTOR IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY OF 1978,  
EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING DETAILS IN ORDER  
TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER. END SUMMARY.

2. IN REVEIWEING OUR RECORDS CONCERNING DISAPPEARANCES  
OR DENTENTIONS OF UNION LEADERS AND WORKERS, WE FIND  
THAT MOST OF THE NAMES WE HAVE WERE EXTRACTED FROM

DOCUMENTS RECEIVED BY THE EMBASSY OR OTHERWISE OBTAINED  
AS FOLLOWS:

-- A STATEMENT DATED JANUARY 14, 1977, PREPARED BY  
THE SELF STYLED "FIRST OF MAY CLASSIST UNION GROUP"--  
AN ORGANIZATION ABOUT WHICH WE HAVE LITTLE INFORMATION,  
BUT WHOSE RHETORIC APPEARS TO HAVE A MILDLY TROTSKYITE  
RING. IT MAY BE AN OFF SHOOT OF THE SMALL REVOLUTIONARY  
COMMUNIST PARTY (PCR).  
-- A COMPOSITE LIST OF 230 "KNOWN TRADE UNION LEADERS  
(WHO HAVE BEEN) PERSECUTED, FIRED OR EXILED SINCE  
MARCH 24, 1976" PREPARED BY ARGENTINE LABOR LEADERS  
FOR THE ICFTU-ORIT (OTTO KERSTEN) DELEGATION IN  
FEBRUARY 1977.  
-- AN UNDATED DRAFT COPY OF A LETTER PREPARED BY THE  
LABOR MINISTRY FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO TRANSMIT TO  
THE ICFTU CONTAINING 235 NAMES AND THE DISPOSITION OR  
STATUS OF EACH CASE.  
-- AN UNDATED MEMO (CIRCA MID 1977) PREPARED FOR  
LABATT BY ORECSUR/CLAT.  
-- A LETTER AND ENCLOSURES DATED APRIL 30, 1977 FROM  
THE "FIRST OF MAY UNION GROUP" ADDRESSED TO "AFL-CIO/ORIT/  
ICFTU/IMF" (WE BELIEVE THIS WAS PREPARED IN CONNECTION  
WITH A VISIT BY UAWS ESTEBAN TORRES).  
-- AN UNDATED AND UNSIGNED MEMO PREPARED ESPECIALLY  
FOR CODEL YATRON BY LIGHT AND POWER UNION LEADER JUAN JOSE  
TACCONE.  
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-- SEVERAL LISTS PREPARED BY THE SOCIALIST WORKERS  
PARTY (PST) IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1977 OF ARRESTED  
PARTY MEMBERS (NOT ALL WORKERS) FOR DELIVERY TO CODEL  
YATRON, MS DERIAN OR THE SOL CHAIKIN SOLIDARITY TEAM  
(AFL-CIO).  
-- A LIST PRESENTED TO US BY THE BELGIAN EMBASSY OF  
ARGENTINES WHOM THE BELGIAN UNIONS WISH TO LOCATE AND  
ASSIST.  
-- WALK INS OR OTHER INDIVIDUAL DENUNCIATIONS REGISTERED  
WITH THE EMBASSY BY NEXT OF KIN OR THE FRIENDS OF VICTIMS.

3. IN ALL, WE HAVE SLIGHTLY OVER 300 NAMES THUS DERIVED  
(AFTER CORRECTING FOR DUPLICATION) OF DISAPPEARED,  
DEAD, OR DETAINED "WORKERS" UNDER PEN, THE ACT OF  
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OR CIVIL OR MILITARY JUDICIAL  
AUTHORITIES ON ACCOUNT OF SUSPECTED INVOLVEMENT IN  
EITHER CORRUPTION OR SUBVERSIVE/TERRORIST ACTIVITIES,  
SOME OF WHICH RELATE TO INCIDENTS ORIGINATING BEFORE  
THE MARCH 1976 COUP. (WE PUT "WORKERS" IN QUOTES,  
BECAUSE INADVERTENTLY THERE MAY BE A FEW NAMES INCLUDED  
WHICH PROBABLY WOULD FIT BETTER IN THE PROFESSIONAL OR  
SOME OTHER CATEGORY). SOME OF THOSE APPEARING AS

DETAINED IN OUR LISTS HAVE SINCE BEEN RELEASED, INCLUDING TWO OR THREE WHO AGAIN ARE ACTIVE IN TRADE UNION AFFAIRS.

4. THE DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN PARA 2 ALLEGE MANY OTHER INSTANCES OF REPRESSION BY THE SECURITY FORCES AGAINST WORKERS AND LEADERS, BUT WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE NAMES OF THE VICTIMS INVOLVED IN THOSE CASES. FROM TIME TO TIME, WE ALSO GET REPORTS OF MILITARY/POLICE OPERATIONS, STAKEOUTS, SEARCHES AND SEIZURES, GUN BATTLES AND ARRESTS IN THE FACTORY DISTRICTS, USUALLY WITHOUT ANY CASUALTY LISTS OR MUCH DETAIL BEING SUPPLIED. SOMETIMES SUCH INCIDENTS ARE REPORTED IN THE PRESS, BUT MORE OFTEN THEY ARE NOT. SOMETIMES WE BELIEVE OUR SOURCES ARE REPORTING ACCURATELY; MANY CONFIDENTIAL

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TIMES WE ARE IN DOUBT BECAUSE OF THE AMBIGUITY OF THE INFORMATION, IN WHICH CASE WE RECORD IT AS RAW AND

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10  
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R 111355Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5264

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DEPARTMENT FOR HA

UNEVALUATED.

5. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS THAT IMMEDIATELY COME TO MIND:  
-- THERE WAS AN INCIDENT LAST OCTOBER IN WHICH MONTONEROS SUSPECTS WERE KILLED JUST OUTSIDE THE FENCE

OF CHRYSLERS MAIN PLANT BY SECURITY FORCES. THE MANAGEMENT CONFIRMED THE INCIDENT TO US. THE INDIVIDUALS WERE NOT CHRYSLER EMPLOYEES, BUT PLANT PERSONNEL INTERPRETED THE ACTION AS A WARNING AGAINST STIRRING UP LABOR TROUBLE.

-- WE HAVE RECENTLY HEAR ALLEGATIONS FROM SEVERALL SOURCES THAT 19 UNNAMED MEMBERS OF THE CERAMICS WORKERS UNION WERE KIDNAPPED LAST NOVEMBER AND KILLED IN CAMPO DE MAYO. THE CERAMICS UNION REPORTEDLY WAS HEAVILY INFILTRATED BY MONTONEROS AT ONE TIME. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, THIS INCIDENT MAY HAVE BEEN RELATED TO A LONGSTANDING LABOR CONFLICT IN A CERAMICS PLANT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BUENOS AIRES (IN VILLA ADELINA).

-- THERE WAS ALSO A FLURRY OF REPORTED ARRESTS, DISAPPEARANCES AND EVEN ONE OR TWO ALLEGED SHOTINGS OF STRIKE PROVOCATEURS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE RAILROAD AND TRANSPORTATION STRIKES LAST NOVEMBER (SE 77 BUENOS CONFIDENTIAL

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AIRES 8309 AND EARLIER).

-- JUAN TACCONE AND OTHER LIGHT AND POWER SOURCES HAVE MENTIONED SEVERAL ABDUCTIONS OF SEGBA POWER UTILITY SHOP STEWARD AND OTHER WORKER ACTIVISTS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS. (TACCONE HAS BEEN UNHELPFUL IN ASSISTING US TO ANSWER 77 STATE 288837 HOWEVER, WE SUSPECT BECAUSE OF THE CHASM IN THIS UNION BETWEEN THE PERONIST LEADERSHIP AND THE REMNANTS OF THE TROTSKYITE ELEMENTS AT THE RANK AND FILE LEVEL IN THE CORDOBA LOCAL).

-- DURING THE RECENT ABORTED STRIKE OF THE LOCOMOTIVE TRAIN ENGINEERS IN MARCH, THREE UNION LOCAL LEADERS WERE ARRESTED AND ARE NOW BEING HELD PENDING CRIMINAL CHARGES (BUENOS AIRES 1798 AND 1752), WHILE FIVE OTHERS REPORTEDLY ESCAPED THE DRAGNET.

-- ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO AT LEAST FIVE UNION ADTIVISTS FROM DIFFERENT UNIONS (CIVIL SERVICE, HEALTH AND TEXTILES) DISAPPEARED IN SEPARATE AND PROBABLY UNRELATED INCIDENTS.

-- A MEMBER OF THE "COMMITTEE OF 5," POSTAL LEADER BALDASSINI, INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR AT LUNCH ON MARCH 28 THAT HIS SECRETARY PLUS SEVEN OTHERS WERE TAKEN FROM A HOUSE THE EVENING BEFORE.

6. THE LABOR SECTOR NATURALLY HAS BEEN AN AREA OF HIGH PRIORITY CONCERN TO THE SECURITY FORCES SINCE THE MILITARY TOOK OVER IN 1976-- ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF WORKER DISCONTENT OVER THE GOVERNMENT WAGE AND ECONOMIC POLICIES. UNDER THIS GOVERNMENTS EMERGENCY SECURYTY LAWS, STRIKES ARE TANTAMOUNT TO SUBVERSION AND ARE SUBJECT TO HEAVY PENAL TIES. MOST OF THE UNION LEADERS AND MEMBERS CURRENTLY UNDER OFFICIAL DETENTION WERE PICKED UP IN THE MONTHS

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE COUP IN AN EFFORT TO CLEAN OUT  
THE FACTORIES OF SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVES AS WELL AS TO  
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LOCK UP THE TOP PERONIST LEADERS CONNECTED WITH  
THE DEPOSED REGIME OF MRS PERON. ABOUT A YEAR AGO,  
HOWEVER, CAPTURED MONTONERO DOCUMENTS BEGAN REVEALING A  
SHIFT TACTICS AWAY FROM DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH  
SECURITY FORCES IN ARMED CLASHES TOWARDS A HEIGHTENED  
EMPHASIS ON INFILTRATING THE LABOR SECTOR IN AN EFFORT  
TO GAIN WORKER SYMPATHY BY PROVOKING AND SUPPORTING  
STRIKE ACTIVITY AND BY ASSASSINATING INDUSTRY FIGURES  
KNOWN FOR THEIR ANTI LABOR ATTITUDES. (CF. BUENOS AIRES  
A-151 OF 12/6/77 FOR A REPORT ON THE MONTONEROS  
ZONAL BULLETIN OF MID 1977). WHILE THE MONTONEROS HAVE  
BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY UNSUCCESSFUL IN CONVERTING LABOR RANKS  
TO THEIR CAUSE, IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT THE  
SECURITY FORCES REDOUBLED OR AT LEAST REVIEWED THEIR  
COUNTERMEASURES IN THE LABOR SECTOR IN RESPONSE TO THE  
NEW MONTONERO THREAT. INDEED, REPORTS OF GOVERNMENT  
REPRESSION OF WORKERS HEIGHTENED DURING THE NOVEMBER  
STRIKE PERIOD LAST YEAR AND AGAIN DURING THE ABORTED  
STRIKE OF THE LOCOMOTIVE TRAIN ENGINEERS LAST MONTH.  
SECURITY FORCES PARTICULARLY ANTICIPATED POSSIBLE LABOR  
TROUBLE BETWEEN JANUARY AND MARCH OF THIS YEAR. A  
HIGH RANKING SECURITY SOURCE RECENTLY TOLD THE EMBASSY  
THAT THE REASON THE NOVEMBER STRIKE GOT OUT OF HAND WAS THAT  
THE GOVERNMENT PROCRASTINATED TOO LONG BEFORE TAKING  
ADEQUATE MEASURES, WHILE THE REASON THAT THE TRAIN  
ENGINEERS STRIKE CALL FAILED LAST MONTH WAS BECAUSE  
THE SECURITY FORCES MOVED IN QUICKLY TO HEAD IT OFF.  
SECURITY OFFICERS ALSO CONFIRM THAT THE JAILING OF THE  
TOP PERONIST LABOR LEADERS OF THE CGT AND THE NEUTRALIZATION  
OF OTHER TOP NATIONAL LEADERS UNDER THE CURRENT SUSPENSION  
OF UNION ACTIVITIES AND INTERVENTIONS HAVE LEFT THE FIELD  
OPEN FOR WOULD BE AGITATORS AT THE PLANT LEVEL, THUS  
REQUIRING A HEAVIER ASSIGNMENT OF SECURITY FORCES TO THE  
LABOR BEAT THAN MIGHT ORDINARILY BE THE CASE.

7. NEVERTHELESS, THE EMBASSY IS UNAWARE OF ANY EXTRA  
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ORDINARY INCREASE IN WORKER KIDNAPPINGS IN RECENT MONTHS  
WHICH MIGHT SUGGEST A NEW PATTERN OF GOVERNMENT REPRESSION  
IN THE LABOR SECTOR. ASKED SPECIFICALLY WHETHER THEY  
PERCEIVED A NEW MOVE OF REPRESSION AGAINST WORKER

LEADERS, TWO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 5, THE ARGENTINE  
LABOR MOVEMENTS TOP AD HOC SECRETARIAT AT THE MOMENT,  
DENIED THAT THIS PAST WEEKEND.

8. HA/HR EVIDENTLY HAS SOME INFORMATION SUGGESTING  
A SIGNIFICANT UPSURGE OF LABOR KIDNAPPINGS THIS PAST  
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, WHICH DOES NOT COINCIDE WITH OUR  
INFORMATION. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE  
DETAILS SO THAT WE CAN LOOK INTO THIS ASPECT OF THE  
PROBLEM FURTHER.  
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## Message Attributes

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